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PARIS FROM A MANSARD.

MY first home in Paris—after a dismal week in a hotel—was in the shortest street of the city, the little rue Paillet, just off from the rue Soufflot, which climbs the Montagne Ste. Genevieve from the Luxembourg Gardens to the Pantheon.

The Pantheon dominates everything in the quarter. The inscription upon its massive architrave, "*Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie Reconnaissante*," is in letters of gold, large enough to be read by the students who swarm with their lady friends up and down the boulevard St. Michel and caper merrily at midnight around the fountain at the foot of the hill.

The mighty double-deck omnibuses, which rattle through winding streets and narrow passages all the way from the Pantheon to the Place Courcelles, rumble heavily up the rue Soufflot upon their return. They seldom stopped at the rue Paillet, for it had only one door, and was, indeed, but a passage cut through to the ancient and narrow rue Malebranche. The house on the last named street which had gained air and light through this bit of engineering, and upon which I looked down, was evidently a very old one. Its walls were brown and stained and beaten by the storms of at least two centuries. Of course this is nothing for antiquity in Paris. The next street is the truly venerable rue St. Jacques, which dates from the Romans—at least follows the course of that old road which, like all others, led to Rome.

That old house was a good deal more interesting than my own. Its lower story contained four shops. First, a laundry where rosy-cheeked girls in charming white caps were to be seen eternally ironing shirts and collars. In strange contrast came next a yawning cavern, within whose Stygian depths there dwelt a coal peddler, with his wife and smutty-faced brood. The step from Madame Leguet's laundry to this glimpse of Pluto's realm made me think of the contrasts of the old three-story miracle plays, wherein were shown all at once, for the spiritual edification of believers; the abode of the blest, filled with beatific spirits in night-shirts, the earth, with its trials and temptations, and a basement appropriately equipped with dragons, imps and boiling cauldrons, as a place of gnashing of teeth.

Next to the "Marchand de charbon et de bois" came the grand porte-cochere, through which all lodgers of the five upper stories of

the house must enter. Its opening disclosed a vista, or rather a thicket, of small hand-carts, the property of an humble "louer de voitures," who occupied the court-yard with his steedless chariots.

To the north of this broad portal was a "cremerie" with front new painted a most suggestive skim-milk blue, a sign to all the world distinctive of the dairy stalls of Paris.

Fourth, and last, within these demesnes was the cunning bake shop, where Madame Migot dispensed, from earliest dawn 'til ten at night, the toothsome loaves of length stupendous, which her broad-chested spouse was continually kneading in the depths below.

Such was the much foreshortened panorama of human activity across the way, upon which I used to look from my exalted sentry box in the mansard of No. 4 rue Paillet. My room was a mere box, perhaps ten feet long by eight in width, furnished with a narrow iron bedstead, a trunk, a chair and a table covered with books. It was in the seventh story, which is a stratum—an "upper-crust," as it were—of art students and servant girls the entire city through. It took 142 stairs to reach it, and the air was fine up there! The price was not extravagant—132 francs or \$26.40 per year.

My restaurant tariff was 27 sous a day: morning, 6 sous; noon, 13; evening, 8,—and it was not especially good fare either. My expenses for the first year were \$250, which included a two months' outing in Normandy and Brittany. We did not eat pie very often upon this allowance, but then Paris is not within the "pie belt."

Entering quietly on one of those summer evenings of 1880, you might, perhaps, have been startled to see, at the further end of the room, the apparition of a headless body, standing erect. A nearer approach to this mysterious object would explain all. 'Twas but a gentle, inoffensive and very homesick art student who, with head thrust out the little window in the sloping roof, was engaged in the profitable work of star-gazing and reverie.

What consolation he found in looking at the heavenly bodies was best known to himself. It was a fancy of his that the unsmiling, unsympathetic face of the moon would carry his message of affection to a certain far away Illinois home. It was a comfort to know that in a few short hours she would be looking down upon those dear ones from whom our dreamer was doomed to a separation of years. Although his thoughts were often thousands of miles away, the exile could not be entirely insensible to the magnificent picture which was nightly spread before him: that wonderful illuminated city like a second star-spangled firmament bending upward to meet the gemmed canopy of the heavens above

If the evenings were beautiful, the mornings were not less so. The art student was awakened regularly at five o'clock by the low-hummed matin song of his next-door neighbor, who invariably dressed himself to this one tune, then stumped away down the interminable stairs to his long day's work. In a year's lodging, side by side, the art student never caught a glimpse of him; never had an opportunity to thank him for his cheery reveille.

Ah! the splendor of those early dawns in Paris. How the day-spring seemed to shred from the narrow streets the misty mantle of the night and roll it up above the housetops! while from those vaporous depths beneath came the clanking and grinding of the heavy garbage cart with its noisy drivers yet invisible; each neighboring chimney-pot was already touched with gold and every little window was a sheet of flame.

*"Faster and more fast,
Over Night's brim, day boils at last."*

There were birds chirping upon the roof and birds peering in at the window. They flutter away at the approach of the art student. He throws open the hinged sash. What a pleasure it is to breathe at such times! With his head thrust far out, our hermit swallows vast draughts of the dewy morning air.

The cart has passed on and for a moment all is silent below. In this glorious upper world the horizon is constantly widening; a boundless fleet of red tile roofs floating amid billows of fog. A forest of chimneys reveal themselves in squadrons like straight-laced British red-coats.

Now the imposing dome of the church of Val de Grace and the balloon-like curve of the Observatory emerge simultaneously from the draperies of night; now the green trees of far away boulevards—the *parc Montsouris*—the great fortifications to the south—the hills beyond—Clamart—Vanves—Issy. Now far to the westward the eye seeks not long the sun-responding Invalides, then flits to the great bridge of Auteuil, to the Bois de Boulogne, to the green slope of St. Cloud, and to where grim Mont Valerien, fortress-crowned, closes the view.

But see! the streets are alive now. Little squat figures, clad in white and in blue, are hurrying along through that deep canon below, into which we peer. They do not step, but locomote like sea-urchins by means of ambulacral protuberances, which are thrust forth and then retracted underneath the big head and shoulders upon which we look.

The morning cries now awakened are in nowise "foreshortened" nor diminished by our altitude. Like the answering clarion of chanticleer,

they rise responsively from many directions. "Voila les fraises," "De belles cerises, bien mures." "Regardez mesdames; des chou'fleurs, d'haricots superb's, de pommes de terre nouvelles," "Oh, les macquer-eaux—Marchande de macquereaux." "Marchande de moules, d'excellentes moules."

Later we shall hear the deep bass voice of the barrel man with his load of wine casks. "O, les tonneaux, marchand de tonneaux;" the scissors grinder, with tinkling bell; the chair mender, with a tower of four, and sometimes of six, chairs upon his shoulders; the pastoral pipe of the goatherd milking his bearded troop into a teacup; the old clothes merchant, who calls "Marchand d'habits, v'la de vieux habits;" the ambulant plumber, who sounds but a single note upon a whistle; the glazier, ruler in hand and with several panes of glass strung on his back, whose eyes are crossed from incessant watching of both sides of the street at once, and whose voice is like unto the filing of a cross-cut saw, as he calls, "Vitrier-vit-ri-er."

How *can* aristocratic Paris sleep on amid such a din!

LORADO TAFT.